

SMITH

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old at the time. Her brief history states that "the food was very poor, and . . . mother being of a delicate nature . . . said she would have died if it hadn't been for the captain of the ship, who took a liking to one of the blond curly-headed Beck children and sent good food to the folks with the child."

I have often thought how wonderful it would have been had Kristina been able to keep a journal, not just of the physical details, but especially of her feelings during those long and crowded 52 days. It would have been in Danish, of course, and probably in pencil, crude and simple, but its value would be inestimable.

One of the 12 deaths during passage was that of Kristina's 5-month-old baby brother, Christian. He died just 10 days before they reached New York.

Five-year-old Dortha "remembered plainly seeing him wrapped in sheets and slid off a board into the sea. This made such an impression upon her tender years she never forgot it."

Reaching far back for these emotions may seem futile and even insignificant; the past is gone and will never come again.

Yet there is something binding about what was felt then and the significance with which we experience our own binding moment in time.

We are blessed and cursed to see the world from our own eyes, as if we owned it, for in our own moment, and from our eyes, we do. Each person's experience is unique, as unique as a fingerprint. It will never be repeated by anyone else.

Kristina's passage, Dortha's passage — even tiny Christian's passage into the deep and boundless ocean — are moments of my own humanity, just as my own humanity is a part of the world my great-grandchildren will inherit, people I will never know, and who will never know me from any closer distance than I have known Kristina.

● **THE LDS CHURCH** Museum of History and Art near Temple Square has a permanent exhibition partially focused on travails of Mormon immigrants of the 1800s. Within the exhibit is a reconstructed section of the living quarters below a ship's deck, where museumgoers can climb into the sleeping quarters and experience the cramped conditions passengers were forced to endure during the long weeks of mid-Atlantic passage.

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